

Randle-Turner House
Itasca Community
Hill County, Texas

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
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PHOTO-DATA BOOK REPORT
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RANDLE-TURNER HOUSE

Itasca Community, Hill County, Texas

ADDRESS: Itasca, Texas
OWNER: Weldon J. Blair
OCCUPANT: Not occupied
USE: Storage purposes

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PART I: HISTORICAL INFORMATION

This structure is of interest in that it is one of the first houses (and one of the very few still intact) built on the northern frontier of the Republic of Texas. The original owner was "Old Man" Randle, who located the first portions of the structure on a bluff by a spring at the head of Richland Creek. Nearby, on the same creek, was Connor's Station, a military outpost with a few soldiers to protect the sparse settlements against marauding Indians. It is probable that Randle first built the southeast room and fireplace, though the southwest room with a similar fireplace must have been added very soon afterward. This was a typical 'dog run' house---two rooms with fireplaces, an open breezeway or run separating them. Original portions of the structure were built before 1845 .

About 1855, Randle sold the house and acreage to John Stubblefield and moved to Bosque County. Stubblefield was born in Orange County, Virginia on November 4, 1804, and died on or near the place April 3, 1877. Stubblefield was a bachelor who had a negro slave woman and son for servants. In 1872, Stubblefield sold the house with 200 acres of land to Joseph E. Turner, possession to take place at the death of Stubblefield. This occurred in April, 1877; and J. E. Turner occupied the place until his death in 1901. Stubblefield, at his own request, was buried between two peach trees in a corner of the garden about a hundred yards southeast of the house .

It is reasonable that lean-tos were added to the back and a gallery was added to the front during the residency of Stubblefield---though it appears that the inside kitchen was added, the dog run enclosed, and other conveniences accumulated early during the occupancy of J. E. Turner.

Reuben Turner, the youngest son of Joe Turner, continued occupancy of the house on his father's death, living there until about 1951. At this time, the house was abandoned for living purposes. Weldon Blair acquired the land and house shortly afterward.

REFERENCES AND SOURCES:

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PART II: ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

- A. Architectural interest and merit: Plan type of this house is Texas 'dog run.' This consists of building two cabins end to end, with a space or 'run' in between. An attic loft extends over the space, making one continuous roof. Enclosed lean tos are usually added to the north, while a continuous, open gallery is similarly added to the south. The condition of the fabric of this building is poor, the longevity of the building being sustained only by good workmanship and enduring materials.

B. Technical description of the exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 48'-4 1/2" by 50'-2"
2. Foundations: dry rubble limestone masonry piers.
3. Wall construction: mortised and pegged oak frame with cypress clapboards outside and cypress horizontal boarding inside. Cypress presumably came from Houston via ox wagon. Other timbers were hewn locally. Old portions of structure is secured with oak trunnels, or pegs.
4. Porches: continuous gallery south facade.
5. Chimneys: two coursed ashlar limestone chimneys centered on original portions east and west facades.
6. Openings: double doorway in dog run portion consists of four panel doors with glazed side lights. Windows are double hung with twelve lights. There is no evidence of shutters.
7. Roof: gabled with wood shingle covering. Cornice and eaves plain cypress. Dormers none.
8. Floor plans: All rooms open to central corridor (dog run).
9. Stairways: none, original scuttle to attic not located.
10. Flooring: random width pine.
11. Doors: four paneled.
12. Wall and ceiling finish: wall random width boards now papered. Beaded wood ceiling not original.
13. Trim: plain wood, painted.
14. Hardware: not significant.
15. Lighting: Present electric system not original. First illumination was by use of candles. After that came the kerosene lamp.
16. Heating: open fireplaces above mentioned.
17. Orientation: Long axis of house runs east-west. Gallery and living portions to south; service portions to outbuildings to north.

18. Enclosures: evidences of fence enclosing house proper extant.
19. Outbuildings: cistern off southeast corner. Summer kitchen foundations near northwest corner. Barns, smokehouse, and other buildings to north. Stubblefield's grave to southeast.
20. Landscaping. Not significant.

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Approved Charles S. Pope Date January 9, 1962
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